

15 July, 1982

MEMORANDUM FOR : Executive Officer, DDS&T  
FROM : James A. Cunningham Jr.  
SUBJECT : Presentation of U-2 Aircraft to National  
Air & Space Museum

Kelly Johnson has advised me that work has begun on refurbishing the U-2C aircraft which is to be donated to the Smithsonian, and that he is making plans to have it arrive at the Paul E. Garber Facility of the Air & Space Museum on 31st August. As you are aware, costs for the refurbishing and transportation of the aircraft are being divided equally by Lockheed Aircraft Corporation and the Pratt & Whitney Group of United Technologies. Costs are estimated to be \$50,000. It will be displayed to the public after it is reassembled inside Building 21 at the Garber Facility.

The aircraft itself, Article 347, was delivered by Lockheed on 9th February, 1956 and was the first U-2 to overfly the USSR on 4th July, 1956 from the U-2 Detachment base at Wiesbaden, Germany. It will be delivered to the Museum essentially in the same paint scheme used throughout the U-2 Program; namely, minus national markings, bearing only a three digit number on the vertical tail surface. Costs precluded removing all paint and returning the aircraft to the all-silver configuration in which the first overflights were performed.

It is appropriate now to decide if there is to be a presentation ceremony and, if so, if the Agency will participate in such a ceremony. Certain facts bear on this question. They are:

1. The aircraft is now, and will remain the property of the U.S. Government after its turnover to the Museum. Even though we expect both Lockheed and Pratt & Whitney executives to participate in a presentation ceremony, neither company can "present" the aircraft to the Museum.
2. Since the U-2 Program of clandestine reconnaissance was a CIA effort, assisted by the United States Air Force, it would seem logical that the Agency take the lead in presenting the U-2 to the Museum on behalf of the Government.
3. If the decision is made to avoid any ceremony at all, once the aircraft is on public view it seems quite likely that the media will seek out Agency officials to ask questions about the U-2 Program that otherwise could be answered at the time of a presentation ceremony. There is no assurance that if the Agency chooses not to be represented at a turnover ceremony that the Air Force will not opt to take charge of the presentation as a valuable publicity event.

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4. The presentation ceremony can be as elaborate or as simple as desired. At one point, when flying the aircraft from the West Coast to Andrews Air Force Base was under active consideration, media coverage of the arrival had been an underlying assumption. Air Force objected to the fly-in, on grounds of liability for insuring the flight as well as cost for fuel, tires, brakes and escape pyrotechnics.

5. The U-2 aircraft is thoroughly in the public domain and has been since 1st May 1960, as is the Agency's sponsorship of the Program. One of the objectives of displaying the aircraft has been to effectively declassify the airframe and engine portions of the Program and to share this remarkable asset with the American people after 27 years. Museums in Moscow and Peking have U-2s on public display and the Air Force Museum in Dayton, Ohio already has such an aircraft available for inspection.

6. The U-2 Program was a watershed event in the history of CIA and marked the entry of this Agency into the field of strategic intelligence collection. To fail to capitalize on the opportunity afforded by this presentation ceremony would seem to me to be less than a sound choice.

Obviously, it would be impossible to invite everyone who would like to come. If a ceremony is held, I would recommend that it be brief and businesslike, with no speeches. The Museum has said that they would provide a photographer for the occasion. Representatives from the Air Force should be asked to participate, including the new Chief of the Air Staff and those whom he might choose to be present. Kelly Johnson has already indicated his willingness to attend, since this is the fourth aircraft on display there that bears his stamp of participation: the others are the "Winnie Mae," the F-80 and the F-104, all now in the Main Hall of the Air & Space Museum downtown. As a target date, we might point to 15th September, since work on the reassembly should be completed not later than 5th September. Either the Acting Director of the Museum or the Chairman of the Department of Aeronautics there would represent the Smithsonian. Composition of the Agency representation at the ceremony should be left to the DCI or DDCI to decide, as should any Congressional participation.

A timely decision would be useful, especially since there is work to be done if, as I recommend, a ceremony takes place.



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